

Message Text

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51

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 EA-06

SAJ-01 BIB-01 NIC-01 PM-03 NSC-05 SS-15 NSCE-00 SAM-01

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FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1820

INFO AMCONSUL ZAGREB IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652:NN/A

TAGS: PFOR YO

SUBJ: ASSESSMENT OF NY TIMES STORY ON YUGOSLAV PRESS TREATMENT
OF U.S.

REF: BELGRADE 0248

1. WE FIND BROWNE ARTICLE ESSENTIALLY ACCURATE BUT LACKING
BALANCE.

2. SINCE IT REACHES BACK FOR PERIOD OF NEARLY A YEAR
(I.E. TO THE TIME OF THE TRIESTE ZONE B DISPUTE IN EARLY
1974), FOR EVENTS TO ILLUSTRATE HIS CONTENTION, ARTICLE GIVES THE
IMPRESSION OF HIGHER INTENSITY OF CRITICISM THAN IS PRESENT.

3. BROWNE ACCURATELY PORTRAYS THE RECENT HIGH LEVEL OF
YUGOSLAV COMMENT RE VIETNAM ASSOCIATED WITH THE ANNIVERSARY
OF THE PARIS ACCORDS. THIS HAS NOT HOWEVER EXCEEDED THE
LEVEL WE HAVE LONG SINCE COME TO EXPECT OF SUCH COMMENT
WHEN THERE IS AN OCCASION CALLING FOR IT FROM THEIR POINT
OF VIEW (E.G., THE PRESS CAMPAIGN ON VIETNAM IN DECEMBER
IN CONNECTION WITH SOLIDARITY WEEK WITH LIBERATION
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MOVEMENTS).

4. THE ARTICLE ALSO COULD BE MISLEADING TO THE UNINFORMED READER WHO MIGHT GET THE IMPRESSION THAT THE VJESNIK ARTICLE ON THE ONLY ATTACK WAS REPRESENTATIVE OF YUGOSLAV PRESS COVERAGE. AS POINTED OUT IN REFTEL, IT WAS THE EXCEPTION AND WAS ESSENTIALLY REPUDIATED BY VJESNIK ITSELF IN A FRONT-PAGE ARTICLE THE FOLLOWING DAY.

5. BROWNE REPORTS LJUBLJANA'S DELO CRITICIZING SECRETARY KISSINGER, BUT DOES NOT MENTION THAT IT WAS THE ONLY NEWSPAPER IN YUGOSLAVIA WHICH FULLY REPORTED HIS COMMENTS REGARDING "STRANGULATION" FROM THE BUSINESS WEEK INTERVIEW - A FACT WHICH BROWNE WAS TOLD BY THE EMBASSY.

6. AS FOR THE EMBASSY'S "COMPLAINT" TO TANJUG, IT IS PLACED IN A MISLEADING CONTEXT BY USE OF THE ADJECTIVE "UNUSUAL". WE ROUTINELY BRING TO THE ATTENTION OF ALL MEDIA IN YUGOSLAVIA ANY INSTANCE WHICH WE CONSIDER CONSTITUTES DISTORTION OR MISSTATEMENT OF FACT, OR IMBALANCE IN COVERAGE. SOMETIMES THIS IS DONE ORALLY, SOMETIMES IN WRITING IF WE FEEL THAT WILL BE MORE EFFECTIVE. THIS WAS DESCRIBED TO BROWNE BY THE ACTING PAO IN AN "ON BACKGROUND" DISCUSSION ABOUT 10 DAYS AGO, AND THE POINT WAS SPECIFICALLY MADE THAT WE DO THIS AS A MATTER OF COURSE.

5. EMBASSY BELIEVES INQUIRIES REGARDING BROWNE ARTICLE CAN BE RESPONDED TO BY SAYING THAT WHILE BROWNE IS OF COURSE AN EXPERIENCED AND KNOWLEDGEABLE REPORTER WE DO NOT ALWAYS AGREE WITH HIS PERCEPTIONS AND ASSESSMENTS. THE ABOVE POINTS THEN COULD BE MADE WITH REGARD TO THE SPECIFIC ALLEGATIONS IN THE ARTICLE.
TOON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, PARAMILITARY FORCES, COMBAT OPERATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 JAN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: MorefiRH
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BELGRA00401
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750031-0263
From: BELGRADE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750116/aaaaanms.tel
Line Count: 93
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 BELGRADE 0248
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MorefiRH
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 19 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <19 MAY 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <19 MAY 2003 by MorefiRH>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ASSESSMENT OF NY TIMES STORY ON YUGOSLAV PRESS TREATMENT OF U.S.
TAGS: PFOR, YO, ORLY AIRPORT
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006